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In the present volume Mr. Flanders has presented us with the lives and times of two of our Chief Justices. We presume the next series will include those of Ellsworth, Cushing, and Marshall. The history of these three men cannot but give ample scope for the exercise of his abilities. If the labor be performed with a skill commensurate with that of which we have already had a sample, it will leave little to be desired. His first volume is indeed one of no ordinary interest, and of far more than ordinary trustworthiness. We do not observe in it, from beginning to end, a single misapplied fact or inaccurate date. His language is clear and forcible, his reasoning philosophical and sound. Many of the questions he discusses — particularly such as concern the local politics of the day, in New York and Carolina, and in the Congress of the nation — are new to the public and are well handled. A pleasing feature of his pages is the portraiture (as it may be called) of various leading personages of the time. The sketches of Arthur Lee, of Hamilton and Galloway, of Adams, and of Gadsden, for instance, are gems of their kind. One or two imperfections of expression and of verbal arrangement we had indeed noted down for animadversion; but with so much that is excellent, to dwell on them now would be but picking at straws. We take leave of Mr. Flanders in the confident expectation of hearing from him again with as much pleasure and as much profit as we have now received at his hands.

ART. IV. — *The Works of LAURENCE STERNE. Illustrated by STROTHEAD.* In four volumes. London.

DURING the past year an elaborate biographical sketch in the Quarterly Review, and the severe comments of the most popular living satirist, in his Lectures on the English Humorists, have brought Sterne's authorship and character again into discussion. The new incidents revealed in the former, and the indiscriminate harshness of the latter, attract us to the subject; for the effect of both is to excite anew compassion for the

errors of Sterne, and to raise our estimate of the genius which could triumph in spite of them. Mr. Thackeray is a much better limner than analyst; the picturesque rather than the philosophical element is his *forte*; he can draw a character far better than he can weigh and judge one. To compare Sterne with Dickens is as absurd as to draw a parallel between Rubens and Hogarth. There is nothing in common in the objects, the inspiration, or the age of these writers. They represent totally diverse phases of humanity, and eras of literature. We agree with Thackeray, that Sterne is too much given to "dreary double-entendre," that he is often artificial and forced; but we cannot assent to the declaration that he is only a jester; on the contrary, it is easy to trace some of the richest streams of English humor to his example. The character of Uncle Toby, and the domestic scenes at Shandy Hall, are so quaint, natural, and humane in their very eccentricities, that the hint was undoubtedly thus given to a less exceptionable school of writers in a kindred vein.

There is a peculiar incongruity in the associations which the name of Laurence Sterne excites. He represents several very distinct and inharmonious phases of character. There is the Prebendary of York and the Vicar of Sutton in the Forest and of Stillington,—most respectable designations; there is mirthful, plaintive, quaint Yorick, with his fancy and humor, his amorous trifling, his rollicking table-talk, and his vagrant sentimentalism; then the affectionate father of Lydia Sterne,—a character worthy of esteem and love; again he appears as a fashionable preacher, a standard author, and a "loose fellow about town," whom it is somewhat disreputable to praise, and even about whose literary merits modesty is often instinctively silent; publishing alternately a volume of *Tristram Shandy* and a volume of sermons,—the man of the world and the priest making a simultaneous appeal to the reading public. Yet, withal, those of us who, in some old sunny, rural home, early became familiar with that long array of little volumes, in obsolete type, and found them here and there exhaling the mellow breath of a gentle, pensive mood, embodied in most apt and graceful phraseology, must confess a kindliness for the author, however we may condemn his

freedom of speech, and resent his abuse of the canons of taste and the integrity of feeling.

Inclined as English writers are to literary biography, and constant as has been the revival of memorials and critiques of their standard authors, since the establishment of the leading reviews, Sterne has proved an exception. That he was born at Clonmel in Ireland, November 24, 1713, and died in London, March 18, 1768; that he preached, dined out, visited the Continent, published books, left debts, one daughter, and the fame of rare gifts and doubtful conduct, is the sum of what we know of the man, except from his writings. Time has added little to the sparse details recorded in his own sketch; and the scattered and meagre notices of his career have not been gathered and arranged with the reverential and loving care bestowed on whatever throws light upon such intellectual benefactors as Milton and Goldsmith. The feeling which prompts such tributary labor has been chilled, in this instance, by a consciousness that Sterne so violated the proprieties of life and the harmonies of character, as to afford a subject too perverse for hearty eulogium, and too imperfect for entire sympathy. The parish register of Sutton contains data, in his handwriting, from which we learn such unimportant items, as that at one time he planted an orchard, and at another the parsonage was destroyed by fire. In a work entitled the *Memoires d'un Voyageur qui se repose*, by M. Dutens, which appeared in London in 1806, occurs the following anecdote, which affords a vivid idea of his social peculiarities: —

“ Nous étions au temps de l’anniversaire du Roi d’Angleterre. Milord Tavistock invita la peu d’Anglois qui étoient à Paris à dîner avec lui, pour le célébrer. Je fus de la partie, où je ne trouvai de ma connoissance que ceux avec que j’étois venu à Paris. Je fus assis entre Milord Berkeley et le fameux Sterne, auteur de *Tristram Shandy*, regardé comme la Rabelais de l’Angleterre. On fut fort gai pendant le dîner et l’on but à l’Anglaise et selon le jour. La conversation vint à tomber sur Turin, où plusieurs de la compagnie alloient; sur quoi M. Sterne m’adressant la parole, demande si j’y connoissois Monsieur Dutens; je lui dis qu’oui et même fort intimement. Tout la compagnie se prit à rire; et Sterne, qui ne me croyoit si près de lui, s’imagina ce Monsieur

D. devoit être un homme assez bizarre, puisque son nom seul faisoit rire ceux qui l'entendoient. 'N'est ce pas un homme singulier?' ajouta il tout de suite; 'Oui,' repris-je, 'un original.'"

Upon this hint, Sterne drew an imaginary, and by no means flattering, portrait of his neighbor, and related many amusing stories about him, unconscious, the while, that these inventions were heard by their good-natured subject. He did not discover the identity of his auditor with M. Dutens until the company separated, when he made ample apologies, which were graciously accepted. All wits have a mode of their own. Addison, we are told by Swift, would flatter the opinions of a man of extreme views on any subject, until he betrayed him into absurdity; Lamb had a way of startling literal people by humorous sallies; Hook was a genius in practical jokes; and Sterne, it appears, used to draw fancy portraits of real characters, to divert his boon companions. Had his accidental victim, in the instance related, been other than an urbane Frenchman, who could make allowance for a *spirituelle* invention, even though it somewhat compromised his own dignity, the "Rabelais d'Angleterre" might have been forced to protect himself from a duel under the very cloth whose immunities he so little deserved. A similar instance is recorded by Dr. Hill, who says that at a dinner-party the professional talk of a pedantic physician wearied the company and annoyed the host, when "good-humored Yorick fell into the cant and jargon of physic, as if he had been one of Radcliffe's travellers," and told such a ridiculous story of curing himself of an adhesion of the lungs by leaping fences, as restored the guests to mirthfulness.

The alleged insensibility of Sterne, the man, may be ascribed, in part, to his extreme frankness. He calls discretion "an understrapping virtue," and seems to have been singularly deficient in caution and reserve. He gave expression to the alternations of his mood and feelings with a reckless disregard to the effect of such inconsistency. At the University, we are told, he "amused himself by puzzling the tutors," and "left Cambridge with the character of an odd man, who had no harm in him, and had parts if he would use them." Thence he went to "the lap of the Church in a small

village in Yorkshire," and, "as he advanced in literary fame, left his livings to the care of his curates," and preferred "luxurious living with the great." The following charitable epitaph well describes such a man:—

"Wit, humor, genius, hadst thou, all agree;
One grain of wisdom had been worth the three."

His patient courtship shows that he was truly in love with his wife; their marriage, in the face of inauspicious circumstances, proves that they were both in earnest; and his frank acknowledgment, a year after, that he was tired of his conjugal partner, argues no uncommon experience, but a rare and unjustifiable candor. His letters to Mrs. Draper, however wrong in the social code, and unprincipled in a married divine, were undoubtedly sincere. His first efficient stroke as a lay writer consisted of a satire to oust the monopolist of a situation which one of his friends desired, and so successful was it that the incumbent offered to resign if the publication was suppressed. His parental affection has never been questioned; no one can doubt that his heart was devoted to, and engrossed with, his daughter Lydia. Inconstancy is one thing, insincerity quite another. The critics of Sterne invariably confound the two; and, because he was so unreliable in his attachments, and not proof against a succession of objects, they endeavor to discredit his pathos as artificial. As well might we seek to invalidate Bacon's philosophy because it failed to elevate him above sycophancy, or Scott's romantic genius in view of his material ambition, or Byron's love of nature on account of his dissipation.

Science, of late years, has thrown new light on the apparent contradictions of human nature, by investigating the laws of temperament, and the relation of the nervous system to intellectual development. A whole category of phenomena has been recognized by acute observation directed to susceptible organizations; and whoever is thus prepared will find no difficulty in explaining the incongruities so obvious between Sterne the man and Sterne the author. His will and intelligence were continually modified by physical causes. He lacked hardihood, and was peculiarly alive to magnetic

agencies. Hence his vagaries, his tender moods reacting to selfish calculation, and the theory of life which he was so fond of elaborating from sensation and fancy. "Sweet pliability of man's spirit," he exclaims, "that can at once surrender itself to illusions which cheat expectation and sorrow of their weary moments!" "I can safely say, that, for myself, I was never able to conquer one single bad sensation in my heart so decisively, as by beating up, as fast as I could, for some kindly and gentle sensation to fight it upon its own ground." "A man who has not a sort of affection for the whole sex, is incapable of ever loving a single one as he ought." "I know not how it is, but *I am never so perfectly conscious of a soul within me*, as when I am entangled in them." Again, in the sermon on the Pharisee, he says: "In benevolent natures the impulse to pity is so sudden, that, like instruments of music which obey the touch, the objects which are fitted to excite such impressions *work so instantaneously that you would think the will was scarce concerned*." Now, if we admit such confessions to be what Sterne claims for them, — "loose touches of an honest heart," — they explain, by the want of balance, the incompleteness of the man, his overplus of sensibility and deficiency of will and moral harmony, and show that it is quite possible for genuine feeling to co-exist with "infirmity of purpose," and emotional sympathy with an absence of disinterestedness. Hence, Thackeray's censure is indiscriminate, when he sums up the character of this author with the statement that he "had artistical sensibility," and "exercised the lucrative gift of weeping," and that he is represented entirely by "tears and fine feelings and a white pocket handkerchief, a procession of mutes and a hearse with a dead donkey inside." This is satire, not criticism. Somewhat more real must Sterne's writings have contained to have survived the fluctuations of taste, and proved more or less models for subsequent and popular authors. Affectation and indecency are so alien to Anglo-Saxon instincts in literature, that only a large admixture of wit or grace could have preserved writings thus meretricious.

This temperament, so undesirable for moral efficiency, was favorable to authorship. Its almost reckless impulse gave a

certain sociability to pen-craft. It led, indeed, to the expression of much that offends refined taste and elevated sentiment, but, at the same time, what he wrote was all the more human for being unreserved. As a good table companion, while he entertains, often in the same proportion forfeits respect, so a writer of this species attracts, by virtue of an *abandon* which is full of peril as a trait of character, and yet induces a thousand felicities of invention and style. Allied to genius, it is a great element of success. Without it Byron would never have imparted the sensation of his own experience, which is the source of his intensity. So largely does it enter into the old English drama, that we are continually startled and thrilled by a boldness of language which, unchastened as it is, takes hold at once upon the emotional in our nature. One secret, therefore, of the charm whereby Sterne maintains so definite a rank in English literature, is the freedom of his tone, involving, with much that is gross, a frank challenge to our sympathies as human beings, — a companionable appeal, which the reader, with even an inkling of geniality, cannot resist. He professes to write for the benefit of those who, “when cooped up betwixt a natural and positive law, know not, for their souls, which way in the world to turn themselves.” He thus establishes a relation with his reader, personal, direct, and genuine, — the first condition of success in authorship. This relation is never long forgotten. He addresses both sexes, in a colloquial, friendly, trustful manner, and seems to identify himself with each by the magnetism of a determined recognition, which it is as unpleasant to evade as it is to repel the courteous and benign advances of an urbane stranger whom we accidentally encounter. He is so confidential, communicative, at his ease, and agreeable, that we instinctively yield.

Contemporary records give us quite a lively idea of Sterne’s *début* in the world of letters. The same prestige has attended many an author before and since, who found in London a market for his books and an arena for social consideration; and the real significance of such prandial honors as attend success in that metropolis is now estimated at its true value. Unless the popular author boasts more legitimate credentials

than his fame as a writer, the "dinner fourteen deep" suggest only a casual position. Walpole, in his usual satirical way, treats the "sun" which the early volumes of *Tristram Shandy* enjoyed, as one of the absurdities of fashion; Johnson sneered at the author's countless invitations; even the amiable Goldsmith called him a dull fellow; Warburton repudiated his intimacy, in despair of the reform he attempted; and Gray, the poet, declared it made one nervous to hear him preach, because his discourse continually verged on the laughable. Meanwhile Sterne encountered these and other better-founded objections with an insensibility which in a nobler cause would have been heroic, but in his case argues little else than recklessness.

Sterne came honestly both by his improvident spirit and his clerical title. His great-grandfather was Archbishop of York, and his father was killed in a duel which originated in high words about a goose. His boyhood was passed in the vagabondage of the camp, his young imagination kindled by the stories of Marlborough's veterans, his prime degraded by intimacy with an obscene writer whose library was an unique collection of works especially adapted to pervert his taste; literary success introduced him suddenly to the pleasures of the town, and to the most perilous of all situations for a man of quick intellect and keen passions,—that of a favorite diner-out and convivial buffoon; the prestige of an unscrupulous wit awaited him at the French capital; and to all his moral exposures he brought a mind unbraced by any clear force of purpose, a nature, both physical and moral, far more sensitive than vigorous, with morbid constitutional tendencies, and enslaved to pleasurable sensations. Thus born and bred, the creature of the immediate, only by a rare and felicitous union of circumstances was it possible for the flattered author, the susceptible cosmopolite, the imaginative epicure, to acquire that strength of will and methodical discipline wherein alone could self-respect be intrenched. He must either have met the problem of life on perpetual guard, conscious that vigilant resistance was his only safety, or retired from its blandishments with heroic self-abnegation; and to neither of these alternatives were his resolution and courage

adequate. Hence his *qui vive* philosophy, his deliberate search for excitement, the habit of absorbing consciousness in variety of scene and outward enjoyment, the attempt to *waive off* all mundane annoyance, and even death itself.

So reduced, at one period, was Sterne, that he hired a pane in the window of a stationer's shop, and placed there advertisements offering his services to all who stood in need of pencraft, from the indolent vicar desirous of an eloquent sermon to the uneducated lover who would fain register his mistress' charms in an anagram. On another occasion, it is related that he stole forth at night, to solicit a loan from Garrick; but, hearing the sounds of festivity within, gently replaced the uplifted knocker rather than expose his shabby dress by appearing in gay company. Debt and neglect made his exit from the world forlorn; not a single friend ministered to his dying wants; and the very companions who had most frequently applauded his table-talk were interrupted in their mirth by the announcement of his decease. These anecdotes form a gloomy contrast to the hues in which Sterne loved to depict human life; for they are unrelieved by cheerfulness and unsoftened by sentiment. Perhaps in all literary history there is not a more impressive instance of the inevitable consequence of that unnatural divorce between genius and character which turns the blessed promise of the former into a mockery. It is as painful in literature as in life to be charmed, and yet to feel obliged to question the spell; to experience a conflict between the sense of beauty and the moral judgment, and to condemn the man while we enjoy the author. Quite the reverse of the Oriental benediction, "May you die among your kindred!" was his confessed wish. "I certainly declare," he says, "against submitting to it [death] before my friends." In accordance with the vagrant humor and casual sentiment that gave a charm to his writing and a recklessness to his character, he desired to close his existence away from home, and to receive the last offices of humanity from strangers; and thus it happened. While hirelings were endeavoring to restore circulation to his feet, as he lay in his lodgings in Old Bond Street, he expired;—not, like Scott, surrounded by awed and weeping relatives and dependants; nor, like Cowper,

with a smile of "holy surprise"; nor, like Johnson, with the friends of years tearfully awaiting the sad event. His ties, with one or two exceptions, had all been convivial and "sentimental," to use his favorite word, rather than affectionate; no grand sincerity of feeling or noble self-devotion had enshrined him in the hearts of those who were amused by his wit, or softened by his pathos; and the man who, of all English authors, made emotion the staple of his writings, and chiefly sought to apply literary art to the expression of sentiment, passed away with the paltriest oblation, and owed his monument to public charity.

It is usual to regard the private correspondence of an author as the best test of his disposition. We have ample means of this nature to aid our judgment. There are domestic letters to his wife and daughter, business letters to Foley his banker, friendly letters to Garrick, his cousin, and several London and Paris acquaintances, and love-letters to Mrs. Draper. In them we discover his social relations, his opinions, private life, and tone of mind, and can easily perceive the sprightliness and geniality that captivated such men as the Baron d'Holbach and Lord Bathurst. His letters confirm our theory of his character; they exhibit the extremes of animal spirits, the constant trials of an invalid, the caprices of a sensitive, and the recklessness of an excitable mind; yet with these defects appear, in equally strong colors, devoted parental love, cheerful philosophy, a conscientious regard to the claims of family and friends, candor, kindness, and a sense of the beautiful and the true. How variable in his moods, how much a creature of mere temperament and sensibility, how prone to artificiality in the midst of natural emotion, was this singular compound of the man of the world and the sentimental epicure, clearly appears in his off-hand epistles. The manner in which he meets the arguments of judicious friends, who urged him to suppress objectionable parts of *Tristram Shandy*, show conclusively that he was deficient in what may be called the instinct of the appropriate. It was the fashion in his day for both the aristocracy and the literati to indulge in table-talk which now would scarcely be tolerated in a barrack; and it is evident that he calculated

upon the popularity of an obscene joke, without any adequate notion of the defilement it cast on a printed work designed for general perusal. In those letters which are addressed to the last object of his sentiment, there is displayed an anxiety for her comfort and welfare which betokens genuine disinterestedness; and during the few weeks preceding his death, a most affectionate solicitude for his child is apparent. A few random extracts will best illustrate these diverse traits of his correspondence.

"She made me stay an hour with her; and in that short space I burst into tears a dozen different times."

"Heaven forbid the stock of chastity should be lessened by the life and opinions of Tristram Shandy! I can assure you that the very passages and descriptions you propose that I should sacrifice in my second edition, are what are best relished by men of wit, and some others whom I esteem as sound critics."

"I never knew what it was to say or write one premeditated word in my whole life."

"Till I have the honor to be as much maltreated as Rabelais and Swift were, I must continue humble. I care not a curse for the critics."

"Lyd has a pony which she delights in. 'Tis a very agreeable ride out in the chaise I purchased for my wife. Whilst they take these diversions, I am scribbling away at my Tristram. So much am I delighted with my uncle Toby's character, that I am become an enthusiast."

"I Shandy it away fifty times more than I was ever wont."

"We are every night fiddling, laughing, and singing, and cracking jokes."

"We live all the longer for having things our own way. This is my conjugal maxim."

"Write, dear Lydia, whatever comes into your little head."

"I am but this moment returned from Scarborough, and have received marvellous strength, had I not debilitated it as fast as I got it, by playing the good fellow with Lord Granby and Co."

"I set out to lay a portion of it out [money derived from Tristram and Sermons] in the service of the world, in a tour round Italy; where I shall spring game, or the deuce is in the dice."

"Almost all the nobility of England honor me with their names."

"After all this *badinage*, my heart is innocent; — and the sporting of my pen is equal, just equal, to what I did in my boyish days, when I got astride of a stick, and galloped away."

"Praised be God for my sensibility! Though it has often made me wretched, yet I would not exchange it for all the pleasures the grossest sensualist ever felt."

"Since got home to quietness, and temperance, and good books, and good hours, I have mended; and am now very stout."

"There is so little true feeling in the herd of the world, that I wish I could have got an act of parliament, when the books first appeared, that none but wise men should look into them."

"My girl cannot form a wish that is in the power of her father, that he will not gratify her in. I am never alone. The kindness of my friends is ever the same; I wish, though, I had thee to nurse me. God bless thee, my child!"

"Dearest, kindest, gentlest, and best of women! may health, peace, and happiness prove your handmaids! If I die, cherish the remembrance of me, and forget the follies which you so often condemned, — which my heart, not my head, betrayed me into. Should my child, my Lydia, want a mother, may I hope you will (if she is left parentless) take her to your bosom?"

We cannot, with some of the wholesale censurers of Sterne, find merely the proofs of licentious intrigue, even in the most lover-like of these epistles, — those addressed to the wife of an Indian nabob. The lady appears to have been one of the most fragile of beings, and to have possessed that ethereal grace of character so often coincident with delicate organizations. Sterne takes infinite pains to convince her that he is not captivated by her beauty, but inspired by her truth, refinement, and social talents. She affects him in so genial a way, that he wishes he could write under the immediate influence of her presence. His advice to her is excellent. It is directed against the too easy and frank disposition usually found in combination with such beautiful traits of character. "Reverence thyself," is his constant and wise monition. He proposes to her a visit to his wife and daughter, and promises that their friendship and care shall alleviate her physical sufferings; buys an arm-chair and other comforts as for an invalid, and begs her to avoid her newly-painted cabin when about to

embark for the East. In short, the candor and solicitude of a tender and undisguised interest, which he evidently wishes his family and intimates to share, appear in the midst of his most sentimental outpourings.

In presenting a new volume of his Sermons to an intimate friend, Sterne declared that they were dictated by his heart, while his other writings came from his head. The style of these discourses is fluent, clear, and sometimes elegant; they are, however, more ingenious than impressive, and their eloquence is didactic rather than glowing. It is easy to recognize the author of *Tristram Shandy* even in the most chastened of his homilies. They indicate a knowledge of the world; Shakespeare is quoted; the text is sometimes opposed, by way of more effectually clinching the argument at last; a parable or Scripture narrative is often gracefully elaborated, and there is a constant allusion to, and defence of, the compassionate virtues. In view of the limits prescribed to this species of writing, and compared with the average sermons of the Establishment in his day, they may be justly declared to possess uncommon interest in both matter and expression; but their tone is too much subdued, and the preacher hovers too near the brink of the humorous and the colloquial, for earnestness. He is most at home in eulogizing affection and sympathy, and in reproducing Bible stories, of one of which he says, "Like all others, much of it depends upon the telling." His two characteristics—frankness and susceptibility—are advocated with zest. "Be open," he remarks, in allusion to marriage, "be honest; give yourself for what you are; conceal nothing, varnish nothing, and if these fair weapons will not do, better not conquer at all than conquer for a day." And elsewhere, "Let the torpid monk seek heaven comfortless and alone; God speed him! For my own part, I fear I should never so find the way; let me be wise and religious, but let me be a man."

In our restless times, the perpetual digressions of Sterne excite impatience; yet in the contemplative mood which genuine reading demands, this fragmentary and desultory style has its advantages. We seem to participate in the authorship, to enter into the process of the book, and, if sym-

pathetic, we soon catch the spirit of leisure and speculation, the random and capricious taste of the writer, surrendering, at last, according to his wish, the reins of imagination into his genial hand. This is especially requisite to enjoy Sterne. He does not rely upon strong outlines and remarkable incidents, but upon the atmosphere of his narratives and lucubrations. Much of his material is but the transcript of vague musing. He deals with no improbabilities, and calls himself "a small hero," and "the sport of fortune"; but his pages, wrought as they are chiefly out of common experience, win over readers by their familiarity of detail and their candor. He seems to be minutely observant under the inspiration of a passionless ideality. There is, too, vagrant humor in both his thought and his style, which has a peculiar charm, especially to the unadventurous dreamer. To read *Tristram Shandy* is like comparing notes with a kindly, eccentric, philosophical good fellow, somewhat of a scholar, but more of a human creature, who "loves a jest in his heart," can rail good-naturedly at the world, and is consoled by wit and animal spirits for its neglect. We soon, therefore, accede to his purpose, honestly avowed, and let "familiarity grow into friendship."

The then recent battles of Marlborough, and his own recollections of barrack and transport, naturally filled Sterne's mind with the technicalities and the enthusiasm of the soldier's profession, reproduced so quaintly in *Uncle Toby* and *Trim*. His attainments were quite limited, but, as with the majority of belles-lettres authors, a taste for miscellaneous reading, and an aptitude for seizing on available materials, whether found in books or in life, supplied him with the needful resources from which to elaborate his wit and humor. All that he required was a nucleus for imagination, a starting-point for random cogitation and sentiment, and this he found at one moment in an historical anecdote, at another in a domestic incident, now in a logical proposition, and again in a Parisian shop or a Calais inn-yard.

It detracts nothing from Sterne's originality, that the prototypes of his characters have been, in many instances, identified. It is the coloring, rather than the invention, of his

writings, in which consists their peculiar charm. As in the plots of Shakespeare, and the travels of Byron, what of mere incident occurs is chiefly important as a nucleus for his idiosyncrasies. It is the treatment, and not the theme, that wins our sympathies. To use a chemical figure of speech, the scenes and personages to which he introduces us serve mainly to precipitate the humor and sentiment of the author. The papers on Sterne by Dr. Ferriar, preserved in the Transactions of the Manchester Society, are but curious literary researches, and throw comparatively no light on the real genius of Yorick. However largely he was indebted to old Burton and Rabelais, the individuality of his conceptions remains. Take away the plot, the scholarship, and the anecdotal episodes, and we have still a fund of quaint generalization, a special vein of pathetic and humorous sentiment, which constitutes the real claim of Sterne as an author. The delight which Dr. Ferriar derived from him was quite independent of his borrowed plumes; it came from the cleverness of his satire, and the power of inducing a mood of quiet emotion and gentle mirth; and especially from a suggestive faculty, in which no English author excels him.

He opened to the mass of English readers that attractive domain in literature, which Rousseau in France and Richter in Germany made popular; though in him, unfortunately, it was not linked with aspirations for social amelioration, as in Jean Jacques, nor with deep-hearted sympathies, as in Jean Paul. Sterne was organized to feel and to evolve, but not to hallow and realize, those beautiful emotions of the soul in which so essentially consist its glory and its bane. In his hands the work degenerated too often into "the art of talking amusing nonsense"; it was debased by indecency, and made contemptible by caprice. Burns declared that he put himself on the regimen of admiring a fine woman, in order to secure inspiration; Sterne said that he had been in love with some Dulcinea all his life, because "it sweetened his temper." He was an amorous jester, a sentimental epicure, and his theory was to make the most of life by adroitly skimming its surface. The tender passion was a means of casual luxury, not a serious experience. He protested against gravity, and,

as Goldoni fought off the spleen by habitually standing on his guard like a wary fencer, Sterne adopted mirth as a panacea, clutching at the straws on the tide of sorrow with the childish impulse of desperation. "I am fabricating them" (the last volumes of *Tristram Shandy*), he says, "for the laughing part of the world; for the melancholy part of it, I have nothing but my prayers."

There was a decided taste in Sterne's day for those colloquial treatises, lay sermons, and minor speculations, which, under the name of the British Essayists, form a department of literature peculiar to England; and this taste was united in the uneducated with a love of narrative and fiction, to which De Foe and other *raconteurs* ministered. The two were admirably combined in Sterne; his writings are made up, in about equal proportions, of speculation and description, — now a portrait, and now a reverie; on one page ingenious argument, on the next, humorous anecdote. Thus something seems provided for every literary palate; and his desultory plan or want of plan became a chief source of his popularity. That he was conscious of an original vein, notwithstanding the abundant material of which he availed himself, may be inferred from his self-complacent query, — "Shall we for ever make new books, as the apothecaries make new mixtures, by pouring only out of one vessel into another?"

Perhaps the absence of constructive art increased the popularity of Sterne; to many readers there is a charm in the boldness which sets rules at defiance; and the author of *Tristram Shandy* not only braved that sense of propriety which is an instinct of better natures, but seemed to take a wanton delight in writing a book without any regard to established precedents, either in its arrangement or the development of its subject. He was the reverse of careless, however, in his habits of composition, and, running through all his apparent indifference of mood, there is obvious a trick of art. It is in the use of his materials, rather than in style, that he violates the order of a finished narration. Gathering from the storehouse of a tenacious memory what he had heard of fortifications, camp life, obstetrics, and foreign countries, and linking them together with curious gleanings of erudition, he

gave vitality and interest to the whole by the introduction of several original and well-sustained characters, and occasional passages of skilful dialogue and pathetic story. The result was a *mélange* whose fragmentary shape and indecent allusions were counterbalanced, though by no means atoned for, by felicitous creations and the graphic limning of still-life. He has candidly given us his own theory of authorship. "Digressions," he says, "are the sunshine; they are the life and soul of reading." Instead of apologizing for an episode, he calls it "a master stroke of digressive skill." "To write a book," he elsewhere observes, "is for all the world like humming a song; be but in tune with yourself, 't is no matter how high or how low you take it."

The best illustration of these traits is the "Sentimental Journey," the author's last, most finished, and most harmonious work. Borrow traversed Spain to distribute the Bible, Inglis to trace the footsteps of Don Quixote; Addison explored Italy for classical localities, Forsyth to investigate her architecture; Beckford revelled in the luxuries of art and climate; English travellers in America have applied microscopic observation to republican defects; some tourists have taken for their *spécialité* geology, others prison-reform, others physical geography,—some gossip and some ridicule; but Yorick alone, so far as we are informed, has chased in foreign regions the phantom of sentiment, and sought food for emotion. The very idea of the book combines the humorous and the pathetic, in that conscious, playful way which individualizes Sterne among English authors. To set out upon one's Continental travels predetermined to enfold all experience, however familiar and commonplace, with an atmosphere of sentiment, and to note the sensations, moods, tears, sighs, and laughs which beset a susceptible pilgrim, has in it a comic element, while there was just enough of reality in the states of mind recorded to banish the notion of a mere fancy sketch. "My design in it," said Sterne, "was to teach us to love the world and our fellow-creatures better." He is too little in earnest,—too sentimental, in the present acceptation of that word,—to have succeeded in this purpose as a man of deeper and less capricious feelings might have done; but, on the

other hand, his book, considered as a literary experiment and a personal revelation, is a psychological curiosity. It admirably shows the difference between a man of sentiment and a sentimental man. The latter character is depicted to the life. Incurable to the last in the matter of *equivokes* and innuendoes, he has deformed this otherwise dainty narrative with indecencies that offer a remarkable contrast to the delicacy of perception and style which has rendered the work a kind of classic in the library of English travels. "What a large volume of adventures may be grasped within this little span of life by him who interests his heart in everything!" This is the text of the *Sentimental Journey*, and it is founded on a genuine idiosyncrasy. Human nature boasts of more generous, permanent, and profound sensibilities than have to do with such a cosmopolitan and superficial heart; yet its exhibition forms one of those odd and suggestive chapters in life that aid our study of character. The design of the work once approved, no one can complain of the execution, always excepting the violations of propriety in certain of the episodes. A monk asking alms, a widow, servants on holiday, a dwarf whose view of the opera is interrupted by a tall soldier, a man lamenting his dead ass, an imaginary captain, a polite beggar, a crazed peasant-girl, an impoverished knight of St. Louis selling *patés*, — these, and similar by-way children of misfortune, are the subjects of the wanderer's compassion and reveries, with occasional memories of Eugenius and Eliza, and of his wife and daughter, who serve as permanent resources upon which his emotion falls back when no fresh object presents itself. In the hands of an ordinary writer these would prove ineffective materials; but Sterne has made distinct and rich pictures of them all. If the feeling smacks of affectation, wit embalms and redeems it. We are constantly disposed, as we read, to echo the Count de B——'s exclamation when Yorick talked him into procuring a passport, — "*C'est bien dit*"; so easy, colloquial, and often most nicely balanced, is the style. The short chapters are like cabinet pictures, neatly outlined and softly tinted; we carry from them an impression which lingers like a favorite air. How often have authors taken from this work a

valuable hint, and, avoiding its exceptionable qualities, elaborately imitated its word-painting and its atmosphere! It modified the literature of travel, which previously bore marks of utter carelessness, by indicating the artistic capabilities of a species of books that had been deemed mere vehicles of statistical and circumstantial information.

Sterne often quotes Sancho Panza, and invokes the "gentle spirit of sweetest humor, who erst did sit upon the easy pen of his beloved Cervantes"; and it is probable that Don Quixote suggested the *Sentimental Journey*. As "the Knight of the Rueful Countenance" went forth, with a peasant for a squire, in pursuit of chivalric adventures, so the author sets out, with a French valet, on a crusade of sentiment. The Don saw everything through the lens of knight-errantry, and the susceptible pilgrim beholds the world through the medium of an exaggerated tenderness. The relations of Sancho and La Fleur to their masters are parallel, however diverse their characters. The incidents which Sterne arrays in an imaginative guise are as commonplace in themselves as those which Cervantes uses as materials for his hero's enthusiasm. What the windmills and the way-side inn are to the one, the Remise door and the glove-shop are to the other. In its effect, too, upon the reader's mind, this exaggerated contact of sentiment with every-day life, is as humorous as that of ancient chivalry with modern utilitarianism; an equally salient contrast and a like quaint vein are opened. Speculation, anecdote, the high and the low, the vulgar and the ideal, blend their associations, as in the Spanish romance, so in the "*Sentimental Journey*"; but all are enveloped in an atmosphere of harmonious feeling and clothed in graceful language. This analogy is increased by the fact, that, as the readers of Don Quixote are enlightened as to the knight's habits by the garrulous squire, so to the valet of the sentimental pilgrim are we indebted for the little authentic information extant regarding Sterne's real state of mind. La Fleur, indeed, was as much an original in his way as his master. A native of Burgundy in the humblest circumstances, he followed the occupation of a drummer for six years, in order to see the world; and an officer of the regiment to which he was attached

obtained for him the situation of a *valet* to a *Milord Anglois*, in which capacity he was afterwards employed by Sterne. His wife ran off with an actor, and he felt so much at home in England, that, during the latter part of his life, he was often employed as a courier, and was sent on repeated missions across the Channel. He used to surprise his master in fits of profound melancholy, whence, upon being observed, he would suddenly rouse himself with some flippant expression. He declares that the sight of misery usually affected Sterne to tears; that he was charitable, and used to make frequent notes of his daily experience; and that his conversation with women was "of the most interesting kind, and left them serious if it did not find them so." The incidents so daintily recorded in his travels, *La Fleur* likewise authenticated; and through him we know that his master busily collected materials for a work on Italy during his tour in that country, although he never could succeed in speaking Italian.

In the history of English literature, there is, now and then, a writer who seems to have caught his tone from the other side of the Channel. The Gallic school was imitated by Pope and Congreve, though in the former it is exhibited rather in style than in range of thought. Brilliancy, artistical refinement, and graceful expression are the characteristics of this class of writers; they deal rather in manners than in passions; fancy usurps with them the place of imagination, wit that of reflection; animal spirits, instead of soul-felt emotions, seem to inspire their muse; they are not often in earnest except in the desire to please; and more ingenious than profound, with more tact than elevation, they offer an entire contrast to the manly, intense, frank utterance of Queen Elizabeth's dramatists and the pure love of nature of the modern bards. Sterne partakes largely of the light graces and the vivacious tone of the best French writers; and one reason of his popularity is the refreshment his countrymen always derive from the less grave and more sprightly attractions of their Continental neighbors. "They order this matter better in France,"—was a maxim which Sterne's taste and temper made applicable not only to the economy, but to the philosophy, of life, of which his view was the opposite of serious. The foreign perversion

which was introduced into English literature during the licentious era of the Restoration was casual and temporary. The writers then so fashionable are nearly all forgotten, while those of the age of Elizabeth and Anne maintain their just and clear supremacy. In a few instances, however, the influence of French taste moulded works on the English side of the Channel which the genius of the authors redeemed from neglect, in spite of an element alien to the Saxon mind; and such was the case with Sterne's writings.

This Continental affinity is still more obvious in his love of the old French *raconteurs*. Dr. Ferriar traces his manner directly to Marivaux; and it is equally significant that no English writer has been more completely domesticated on the Continent. Though we find cheap editions of Young and Dr. Franklin in the book-stalls of Paris and Florence, the gloomy speculation of the one and the practical wisdom of the other are but vaguely appreciated in France and Italy, while the sentimental refinements and genial musings of Sterne adapt themselves readily to their more susceptible and imaginative minds. It is true that the usual absurd mistakes occur which seem inevitable in the French interpretation of English literature, — one critic accepting Tristram Shandy as a veritable biography, and another classifying its author with the social innovators and daring thinkers of the revolutionary era; yet, on the other hand, very faithful translations of Sterne, especially in Italian, are not only obtainable, but have become the favorite reading of that large class who delight in Foscolo.

A recent critic* denies to Sterne all exact proficiency in the French language, and cites many errors to prove his incorrectness; as, for instance, *c'est tout egal* for *c'est egal*, *M. Anglois* instead of *M. l'Anglois*, etc. La Fleur, in speaking of a horse, is made to say, *C'est un cheval le plus opiniâtre du monde*, and it is argued that a good French scholar would never have applied the word *opiniâtre* to a horse, nor substituted the article *un* for *le*. In the chapter on "The Passport," also, *ces Messieurs les Anglois* should be *Messieurs les Anglois*. The correct French in the Drummer's letter, it is declared from inter-

* Notes and Queries.

nal evidence, is not Sterne's. Colloquial blunders, however, do not invalidate the Gallic pretensions of this author, whose natural affinity with his mercurial neighbors across the Channel is self-evident. French criticisms of English literature are proverbially superficial, and often ludicrous; Voltaire talks of Shakespeare, Chateaubriand of Milton, and Guizot of modern British poets, in terms of vague generalization, which show that at best they have only appreciated the tone without penetrating to the deep significance and individual genius of these authors. It is otherwise with such a writer as Sterne, although some amusing errors have occurred in the French estimate of his aims and character. The qualities which rendered him popular and eccentric are quite as well recognized by the nation he loved so dearly, as at home. Bayle describes him as "uniquement occupé à étudier ses sensations, ses goûts, ses penchants particuliers, à rendre un compte exact et minutieux des émotions qu'il éprouve et des hasards qui les font naître." He calls him "malin, pathétique," notes his "simplicité," his "sensibilité exquise et douce," his "expression fine, plaisante et moqueuse qu'indique un esprit vif, brillant, et caustique." "Sa conversation," he observes, "était animée et spirituelle; son caractère jovial mais capricieux et inégal, conséquence naturel d'un temperament irritable et d'un mauvais état de santé habituelle," and he declares him a "*plagiar*" who arranged "*sa mosaïque avec tant d'art.*"* A more discriminating and true portrait of Sterne by a foreign critic can scarcely be imagined.

The vagrant boyhood of Sterne, as the offspring of an army officer, his school-days in Yorkshire, followed by the academical training of Cambridge, and twenty years of clerical life such as it was in his day, when desultory reading, field sports, and gossip occupied more time than priestly functions, afford sufficient materials for the kind of culture and the knowledge of life which his writings display; and if to these resources we add the ordinary incidents of Continental travel and the habit of *amateur* exercises in music and painting, we can easily trace the external elements that constitute

* Biographie Universelle.

the framework or ingredients of his books. Their real interest was altogether derived from the idiosyncrasies of the author. These were at first inappropriately confined to a profession for which he was singularly unfit; and it is one of the most remarkable facts in his career, that not until past middle life did he achieve a literary reputation. His tendencies of character as well as of mind were utterly opposed to the office which, according to the irrational, not to say impious, system of dispensing church livings, was, for reasons altogether factitious and worldly, bestowed upon a man who, as one of the *coterie* of wits about town, of courtiers, politicians, or in any lay vocation, might have left a reputation comparatively free from blame. His profession was a continual reproach to his levity, and has caused him to be judged by subsequent moralists with severity; while his name has become a standard example of the insincerity of authors and the illusions of sentiment,—the prototype and representative of the class who weep over the corpse of a donkey and at the same time maltreat their wives.

All incomplete characters must undergo an analytical sifting to separate the chaff from the wheat, and a like process is requisite in literature, where the superiority of a writer in certain particulars is modified by great defects in others. To no English author is the careful separation of gross alloy from pure metal more indispensable than in the case of Sterne. Time, which shapes reputation as well as the less abstract interests of humanity to “a perfect end,” has already effected this result. A few genuine characters, episodes of true pathos, sketches of life drawn with exquisite art, phases of delicate sentiment, pictures traced and mel-
lowed with remarkable tact and beauty,—these have survived whole pages of equivocal morality and pedantic display. Such are “the Story of Lefevre,” and “Maria,” and the characters of Uncle Toby, Trim, Obadiah, Dr. Slop, and Shandy. It is the originality of characterization, and finished bits of humor and of sentiment, that redeem both the writings and the fame of Sterne. What is indecorous and obscure is rejected by the literary gleaner; and the tedious digressions, the stolen erudition, the violations of good taste, and the

artificial expedients are forgotten in the occasional triumphs of art and nature which the genius of the author produced in his better moments. This partial success, this obscure glory, is a striking instance of the truth of Pope's trite maxim, that "want of decency is want of sense."

Not a little of our interest in Sterne is historical. The vein he opened has been more deeply worked by subsequent authors. Compared with the later essayists, his didactic passages want sustained glow and point; compared with succeeding novelists, his characters are deficient in variety and impressiveness; but in his speculations and his pictures he has produced studies of characterization. Artistically speaking, few English authors have proved more suggestive. Without elaborate finish, he furnishes perfect hints. His writings are to others of the same order which have since appeared, as the cartoons of the old masters are to the historical pictures of their followers. In the long array of the novelist's creations,—“the beings of the mind and not of clay,”—from those of Fielding to those of Dickens, we linger before the few but well-defined originals of Sterne with a peculiar sense of their human significance; unideal and unimpassioned, yet distinct and natural, they have the rare merit of exciting an interest without any extraordinary traits or adventures; they embody the genius of humor, reality made attractive by its consistent, habitual, minute exhibition; they are like the best Flemish paintings, mellow in tone, familiar in subject, and marvellous in execution,—true to Nature in her quips and fantasies, in her whims and every-day phases, rather than in deep or wonderful crises. In his way, Sterne is Shakespearian; and although superseded to a great degree, he keeps a hold upon intelligent sympathy by the originality of his manner, which is constantly reproduced in popular literature.

Indeed, if a constant though unacknowledged and perhaps often unconscious reference to an author's scenes and ideas, and the frequent imitation of his style by subsequent aspirants for literary distinction, may be considered as a reliable test of originality and success, Laurence Sterne, notwithstanding the blots on his escutcheon, occupies a permanent niche in the temple of fame. Indirect memorials of his genius

abound. Ball Hughes modelled the delectable group of Uncle Toby and the Widow Wadman; and Leslie's delicate pencil traced Yorick at the Glove-Shop. Travellers who land at Calais daily think of the Sentimental Journey as the porters on the quay vociferate "*Hôtel Dessein*"; and advocates, when hard pressed to combat testimony, allude magnanimously to the impracticable witness by quoting the incident of Uncle Toby and the fly. "There is room enough for thee and me," is the most convenient of philanthropic evasions. The schoolboy early learns to regard Sterne as a master of the pathetic, through familiarity with the story of Le Fevre in his well-thumbed reader. An American bishop is said to have consumed whole evenings in searching the Bible for the sentence he proposed to use as a text for his next sermon, "God tempers the winds to the shorn lamb," and to have blushed when he was informed that the author of that gentle and endeared saying was no other than the most indecorous genius of his own order; and a celebrated New York medical professor of the old school quoted Tristram Shandy so habitually in his lectures, that country students used to ask, at the bookstores, for "Dr. Sterne's Midwifery." "Shandean" long ago became an adjective as significant and common as "Pickwickian" is to-day.

Among the popular writers who have either directly followed the vein of Sterne, or profited by his style, are Mackenzie, Irving, and Dickens. Many favorite volumes of "Reveries," by bachelors and others, now in vogue, are of his identical model; the desultory and quaintly simple, yet learned production of Southey, "The Doctor," is essentially the same in plan as Tristram Shandy; while a still more remarkable evidence of the popularity of our author's manner may be found in the fact that, after Sir Bulwer Lytton had run through the entire scale of the intense school of novel-writing, he surprised his admirers, and won over a new and previously antagonistic circle, by producing in "My Novel" a work of fiction so palpably imitated from Sterne as, in many passages, to have the effect of prolonging the keynote of his sentiment and exhibiting a *rifacimento* of his style.

In one noble mansion in London is his bust by Nollekens,

and in another, the famous portrait of him by Reynolds, — copies of which have long been favorite illustrations with the disciples of Lavater and Gall. In Old Bond Street, No. 41, now a cheesemonger's, but known in his day as "The Silk-bag-shop," are the lodgings whence are dated many of his letters, where, according to tradition, he finished the "Sentimental Journey," and where occurred his melancholy death. In the burial-ground fronting Hyde Park, on the road to Bayswater, about the centre of the western wall, is the headstone that marks his grave, set up, as the best of London guide-books truly declares, "with an unsuitable inscription," by a "tippling fraternity of Freemasons."

The most interesting problem involved in his career as an author is the rank he holds as an expositor of sentiment. Critics have viewed him, in this regard, at the two extremes of hypocrisy and sincerity, of artifice and of truth. In order justly to estimate Sterne with reference to this, his most obvious claim and purpose, we must consider the true relation between human feeling and its written expression.

Sentiment, as an element of literature, is the intellectual embodiment of feeling; it is thought imbued with a coloring and an atmosphere derived from emotion; its reality, duration, and tone depend in books, as in character, upon alliance with other qualities; and there is no fallacy more common than that which tests its sincerity in the author by the permanent traits of the man. It may be quite subordinate as a motive of action, and altogether secondary as a normal condition, and yet it is none the less real while it lasts. In each artist and author, sentiment exists in relation to other qualities, which essentially modify it while they do not invalidate its claim. To say that a man who writes an elegy which moves us to tears, and at the same time displays the most heartless conduct in his social life, is therefore a hypocrite, is to reason without discrimination. The adhesiveness, the conscience, and the temperament of each individual directly influence his sentiment, in one case giving to it the intensity of passion, in another the sustained dignity of principle, now causing it to appear as an incidental mood, and again as a permanent characteristic. United to strength of will or to earnestness of

spirit, it is worthy of the highest confidence ; in combination with a feeble and impressible mind, or a lightsome and capricious fancy, or a selfish disposition, it is quite unreliable. In either case, however, the quality itself is genuine, its type and degree only are to be questioned. Thus regarded, the apparent incongruity between its expression and its actual condition vanishes.

Sentiment in Burns was essentially modified by tenderness, in Byron by passion, in Shelley by imagination ; meditation fostered it in Petrarch, extreme susceptibility in Kirke White. In the French Quietists it took the form of religious ecstasy. In the Old English drama it is robust, in the Spanish ballads chivalric, in Hamlet abstract and intellectual, in "As You Like It" full of airy fancifulness. Miss Edgeworth and Jane Austen exhibited it as governed by prudence and common sense, Mrs. Radcliffe, as rendered mysterious by superstition. Scott delighted to interpret it through local and legendary accessories, under the influence of a sensuous temperament. In the Dantesque picture of Francesca da Rimini it is full of tragic sweetness, and in Paul and Virginia perverted by artificial taste. In Charles Lamb it is quaint, in Hood deeply human, in Cowper alternately natural and morbid, in Mackenzie soft and pale as moonlight, and in Boccaccio warm as the glow of a Tuscan vintage. Chastened by will, it is as firm and cold as sculpture in Alfieri, and melted by indulgence, it is as insinuating as the most delicious music in Metastasio. Pure and gentle in Raphael, it is half savage in Salvator and Michael Angelo ; severely true in Vandyke, it is luscious and coarse in Rubens. And yet, to a certain extent and under specific modifications, every one of these authors and artists possessed sentiment ; but held in solution by character, in some it governed, in others it served genius ; in some it was a predominant source of enjoyment and suffering, and in others but an occasional stimulus or agency. Who doubts, over a page of the *Nouvelle Heloise*, that sentiment in all its tearful bliss was known to Rousseau ? The abandonment of his offspring to public charity does not disprove its existence, but only shows that in his nature it was a mere selfish instinct. The history

of philanthropic enterprise indicates the same contradiction. Base cruelty has at times deformed the knight, gross appetites the crusader, hypocrisy the missionary, and the men whose names figure in the so-called charitable movements of our day are often the last to whom we should appeal for personal kindness and sympathy. The same inconsistency is evident in that large class of women in whose characters the romantic predominates over the domestic instincts. "Confessions" form a popular department of French literature, and are usually based on sentiment. Yet their authors are frequently thorough men of the world and intense egotists. It is this want of harmony between expression and life, between the eloquent avowal and the practical influence of sentiment, patriotic, religious, and humane, which gave rise to the invective of Carlyle, and the other stern advocates of fact, of action, and of reality. Meanwhile the beauty, the high capacity, the exalted grace of sentiment itself is uninvaded. We must learn to distinguish its manifestations, to honor its genuine power, to distrust its rhetorical exaggeration.

The truth is, that Sterne's heart was more sensitive than robust. It was like "wax to receive," but not like "marble to retain," impressions. Their evanescence therefore does not impugn their reality. Perhaps we owe the superiority of their artistic expression to this want of stability. Profound and continuous emotion finds but seldom its adequate record; men thus swayed recoil from self-contemplation; their peace of mind is better consulted by turning from than by dwelling upon their states of feeling; whereas more frivolous natures may dally with and make capital of their sentiment without the least danger of insanity. We have but to study the portrait of Sterne in order to feel that a highly nervous organization made him singularly alive to the immediate, while it unfitted him for endurance and persistency. That thin, pallid countenance, that long, attenuated figure, the latent mirth of the expression, the predominance of the organs of wit and ideality, betoken a man to "set the table in a roar," — one who passes easily from smiles to tears, from whose delicately strung yet unheroic mould the winds of life draw plaintive and gay, but transient music; — a being more artistic

than noble, more susceptible than generous, capable of a shadowy grace and a fitful brilliancy, but without the power to dignify and elevate sensibility. His fits of depression, his recourse to amusement, his favorite watchword, "*Vive la bagatelle*," his caprice and trifling, his French view of life, his alternate gayety and blue-devils, attest one of those ill-balanced characters, amusing in society, ingenious in literature, but unsatisfactory in more intimate relations and higher spheres.

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- ART. V.—1. *Schamyl als Feldherr, Sultan, und Prophet; und der Caucasus*. VON DR. FRIEDRICH WAGNER. Leipzig. 1854.
2. *Der Caucasus und das Land der Kosaken*. VON MOZITZ WAGNER. Dresden. 1848.
3. *Journal of a Residence in Circassia*. By JAMES STANISLAUS BELL. London. 1840.
4. *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1853. "*La Guerre de Caucase*."
5. *Russia and England*. By JOHN REYNELL MORELL. London. 1854.

THE Eastern War has given a fresh interest to the war of independence in Circassia. In this "cradle of the races" there has been going on for more than twenty-five years a struggle, which, for the persistency of the one party, and the energy, enthusiasm, and obstinacy of the other, is not surpassed in those chapters from which the schoolboy wrests the story of Greek and Persian battles. The poor, partly civilized tribes of Circassia, with no very lofty ideal of freedom to fight for, have succeeded, hitherto, in protecting themselves against the encroachments of Russia. They have steadily refused to pay taxes and to do homage to the Czar. They have laughed at his proclamations and defied his armies. They have held themselves aloof from him in all respects, so that now the Caucasus lifts its mountain summits, like islands of the sea, above a wide waste of Russian provinces.

In the present article we propose to give a brief account